

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FRB-03 CIEP-01 EUR-12 CEA-01

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R 241115Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2611

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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PASS USDA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EPAP, ECON, AG

SUBJ: ALGERIAN CEREAL PRODUCTION

REF: (A) ALGIERS 1133 (B) STATE 116063 (C) ALGIERS 0691

1. EMBOFF TRAVELED 500 KILOMTERES THROUGH ALGERIAN CENTRAL CEREAL GROWING AREAS JUNE 4 WITH AGRICULTURAL SPECIALIST, HERBERT STEINER, AND THEN 1200 KILOMETERS THROUGH EASTERN GROWING REGION JUNE 20-22. CEREAL CROPS ARE VERY LATE THIS YEAR. HARVESTING HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN WITH LESS THAN 25 PERCENT CUT. SOME FIELDS ARE STILL GREEN. HOWEVER, VERY LATE RAINS ALL DURING MONTH OF MAY AND ONCE A WEEK IN JUNE HAVE LED TO IDEAL LATE GROWING CONDITIONS. TEMPERATURE HAS ALSO STAYED COOL. THUS, MUCH OF EARLIER CROP LOSS HAS BEEN MADE UP AND ECONOFF, NONEXPERT, NOWPREDICTS HARVEST OF ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF NORMAL. THIS IS MAJOR INCREASE FROM EARLIER ESTIMATES OF 45 PERCENT OF NORMAL. SINCE ALGERIAN NORMAL CROP IS ABOUT 1.8 MILLION TONS, THIS YEAR'S CROP MAY BE IN AREA OF 1.2 TO 1.3 MILLION TONS.

2. CANADIAN ECONOFF, ALSO NON EXPERT, WHO HAS JUST TAKEN
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SIMILAR TRIP, WAS LESS OPTIMISTIC AND PREDICTED ALGERIAN CROP

OF 50-60 PERCENT OF MORMAL. HE NOTED MUCH OF CROP IS READY FOR HARVESTING, BUT FEW COMBINES WERE SEEN TO BRING WHEAT IN.

3. IT VERY CLEAR THAT COASTAL AREA HARVEST IS BADLY HURT BY WEEDS. WILD OATS ARE RAMPANT IN WHEAT FIELDS. CYMMET EXPERTS PREDICT 30 PERCENT CROP LOSS IN AFFECTED AREAS DUE TO WEEDS ALONE.

4. EFFECT ON US WHEAT EXPORTS OF LARGER ALGERIAN HARVEST IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE TOO LARGE. EMBASSY STILL CALCULATES ALGERIAN IMPORT NEEDS AS FOLLOWS: PRODUCTION-1.2 MILLION TONS; CONSUMPTION-2.5-3.5 MILLION TONS; IMPORTS-1.2-2.2 MILLION TONS. ALGERIAN CEREAL OFFICE DENIES THESE FIGURES BUT REFUSES TO PRODUCE ALTERNATIVE FIGURES. ALGERIANS SAY CONSUMPTION FIGURES ARE TOO HIGH, BUT ALGERIAN FLOUR MILLS USED 3.5 MILLION TONS OF GRAIN IN 1974. IN ANY CASE, SLIGHT DECLINE IN IMPORT NEEDS DUE TO LARGER HARVEST IS MORE THAN TAKEN UP BY DECLINE IN CANADIAN WHEAT SALES.

5. EMBASSY IS IN RECEIPT OF NOTICE OF USG APPROVAL OF FOUR MILLION DOLLARS OF CCC CREDITS TO ALGERIA ON REQUEST OF CONTINNENTAL GRAIN COMPANY. WE STILL AWAIT WORD ON PL 480 SALES TO ALGERIA PER CONVERSATION BETWEEN JAMES HUTCHINSON AND OFFICIALS OF ALGERIAN CEREAL OFFICE OAIC ON MAY 22, 1975, AS WELL AS LATEST LIMITATIONS ON CCC WHEAT CREDITS.
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